

## Synovial Sarcoma

Synovial sarcoma, also called synovioma, is a rare cancer that begins in synovial tissue. Synovial tissue can be found in tendons (tissues that connect muscle to bone), bursae (fluid-filled, cushioning sacs found in spaces between tendons, ligaments, and bones), and the cavity (hollow enclosed area) that separates the bones of a freely movable joint, such as the knee or elbow.

Synovial sarcomas occur mainly in the arms and legs, where they tend to arise in the area of large joints, especially the knee region. Less frequently, the disease develops in the head and neck and in the trunk. This cancer occurs mostly in adolescents and young adults, and it affects more males than females.

The most common symptom of synovial sarcoma is a deep-seated swelling or a mass that may be accompanied by pain or tenderness. In a few cases, pain or tenderness is present for several years even though a mass cannot be felt. These cases can be easily mistaken for arthritis, bursitis, or synovitis. Sometimes synovial sarcoma causes other symptoms related to the location of the tumor. The diagnosis of synovial sarcoma is made by biopsy (removal of tissue for examination under a microscope).

The type of treatment selected depends on the extent (stage) of the disease and the location of the sarcoma. The most common treatment for this type of cancer is surgery to

remove the entire tumor, nearby muscle, and lymph nodes. Some patients have radiation, chemotherapy, or a combination of treatment methods. Biological therapy (treatment to stimulate or restore the ability of the immune system to fight the disease) and new types of chemotherapy are currently being studied in clinical trials.

Synovial sarcoma tends to recur locally and to involve regional lymph nodes. Distant metastasis (spreading to other areas of the body) occurs in about one-half of the cases, sometimes many years after the initial diagnosis.

Information about ongoing clinical trials is available from the Cancer Information Service (see below), or from the National Cancer Institute's clinical trials Web site at <http://cancertrials.nci.nih.gov> via the Internet. At this Web site, trials for patients with synovial sarcoma are included with "sarcoma, soft tissue, adult" and "sarcoma, soft tissue, childhood."

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### **Sources of National Cancer Institute Information**

#### **Cancer Information Service**

Toll-free: 1-800-4-CANCER (1-800-422-6237)

TTY (for deaf and hard of hearing callers): 1-800-332-8615

#### **NCI Online**

##### ***Internet***

Use <http://www.cancer.gov> to reach NCI's Web site.

##### ***CancerMail Service***

To obtain a contents list, send e-mail to [cancermail@icicc.nci.nih.gov](mailto:cancermail@icicc.nci.nih.gov) with the word "help" in the body of the message.

#### **CancerFax® fax on demand service**

Dial 301-402-5874 and listen to recorded instructions.

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